LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As this issue goes to press, the question of state funding for public libraries is still up in the air with possibilities of legislation to allow a one-time allocation of state revenue sharing money as well as consideration of per capita funding to public libraries as a line item in the State Library's budget. The ALSA funding bill was not introduced this session (according to Legislative Committee Chairperson, Ray Gnatt, likelihood of the legislature considering "new money" bills was slim and there was some question as to whether the legislature would consider funding that was not equitable in the sense of being based on a per capita figure rather than on "need"); nor was the ALSA "housekeeping" bill pursued this time around. A proposed amendment to the 1947 Library Law to allow public library boards to pay for their library's membership in associations was not introduced this session, but Gnatt anticipates bringing that bill and the ones mentioned above to the ILA membership at the April conference for approval and an early start towards the next legislative session. In other legislation affecting libraries in the current session, an amendment to last year's obscenity bill was introduced for the purpose of defining "libraries" and "museums" as tax exempt organizations (and to prevent commercial establishments from identifying themselves as libraries and museums in order to avoid prosecution for dealing in obscene materials). Another proposed bill (HB 1180) would "liberalize" leases for library construction.

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